



DURHAM CITY-COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
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GUIDELINES FOR NAMING STREETS IN DURHAM

The naming of any public or private street within the City of Durham and/or Durham County must comply with the Durham City-County Planning Department's street naming standards. The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) requires street names shall be established for public and private streets and may be established for shared driveways within townhome developments. The UDO also specifies that street names shall not be duplicated nor closely approximate existing street names. Additional criteria for street names have been established based on street length, width, and other characteristics.

The Unified Development Ordinance. Section 12.3.2, Street Names

A. A street name shall be established for a public street or a private street. A street name may be established for a driveway allowed for access within a townhouse development under Sec. 12.2.2B.2.b. above, unless the approving authority determines that establishing a name would encourage circumvention of development requirements for private streets, sidewalks, street trees, or other items. Any street name established for a driveway in a townhouse development shall be included on the subdivision plat or site plan, and a subdivision plat revision or site plan amendment shall be required in order to establish a street name for a driveway within an existing townhouse development.

B. Street names shall not duplicate nor closely approximate existing street names within the City or County. Extensions of existing, named streets shall bear the existing street name. A complete list of previously used names shall be maintained by the Planning Department.

Naming Streets. The approval process for naming those streets and driveways eligible for names is done through the site plan or subdivision process, as appropriate. Applicants must submit their list of possible names to the case planner for the site plan or subdivision. The case planner will forward that list onto the street name review planner as a part of the site plan or subdivision review process.

The following guidelines should be considered by applicants when proposing names for streets. These guidelines will be used in the street name vetting process by the reviewing staff.

1. Staff will only approve the number of names needed, and shall not approve extra names.
2. Names shall only be used for the project for which they were approved and shall not be used for other locations or projects. For example, if PICTURE PERFECT DRIVE was approved for Many Meadows Subdivision, that name cannot be saved and used for Babbling Brook Subdivision, even if the applicant is the same for both site plans.
3. Approval of names includes the approval of the spelling, a variation from the approved spelling shall not be allowed.
4. Approval may be denied based on overuse of a name component (OAKS DRIVE, OAK RIDGE DRIVE, OAK PLEASANT DRIVE, etc). Changing the spelling of an overused word does not create a new word (ANN is the same as ANNE).
5. Each street name must consist of at least two parts: the primary name and the street suffix type. The approval of the street suffix is part of the street name approval. The primary name shall not include a street suffix as part of that name. For example LEAFY DRIVE ROAD would not be approved because drive a suffix used as a part of the primary name. Street suffixes shall only be from the approved USPS list. The list can be found online at <http://www.usps.com/>
6. Streets shall have the street type as a suffix, not as a prefix. For example, AVENUE OF AMERICAS places the suffix before the primary name, and is therefore not approvable.
7. Streets shall have unique names and shall not duplicate existing names. Names that duplicate or approximate an existing name, in spelling or pronunciation shall not be approved. For example MAIN STREET is an existing name, therefore MANE STREET, MAINE STREET, and MAIN DRIVE would not be approved.
8. Avoid words or names which are difficult to pronounce and words in which the pronunciation is different than spelling, and therefore may cause confusion for citizens, users and service providers.
9. Cardinal directions shall not be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the current addressing system. For example, EAST APPALACHIA DRIVE would not be approved if there were no corresponding WEST/NORTH/SOUTH APPALACHIA DRIVE. Additionally, a directional name will not be approved as a standalone name in a location that is contrary to the directional portion of the name. For example, NORTH COAST ROAD would not be appropriate along the south shores of Jordan Lake.
10. Numbers, spelled out or symbolized, shall not be used in the street name. For example 36 HUNDRED YARD DRIVE would sound like 3600 YARD DRIVE, and may cause confusion.

11. Abbreviations or acronyms shall not be used in the street name.
12. Special characters such as hyphens, symbols, apostrophes or other punctuation, or signs shall not be used as characters in the street name.
13. Extensions or conjunctions shall not be used in the street name.
14. The maximum length for street names will be twenty (20) characters.
15. Full names or proper names, such as GEORGE WASHINGTON DRIVE, or DOLLEY MADISON LANE, may only be approved by the governing body (City Council or County Commissioners, as appropriate).